

The Honorable Michael K. Powell  
Chairman  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12th Street, S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20554

Dear Chairman Powell:

I'm writing to urge you to support the proposed merger between EchoStar Communications and Hughes Electronics. I believe the merger holds tremendous potential for my company in Grand Rapids, MI which sells EchoStar's DISH Network satellite TV service. The new company will offer a more attractive product to consumers, and this will mean more business for my company.

None of my customers can receive their local broadcast channels via satellite because the DISH Network does not have the channel capacity to carry smaller television markets. Currently, EchoStar offers service in only 36 markets. This is a source of frustration for my consumers. The proposed merger between EchoStar and DIRECTV would allow the combined company to offer local broadcast channels in all 210 television markets nationwide by eliminating the duplication of identical programming carried by both services. If the merger is approved, satellite TV will be a more competitive alternative to cable, and this is good for business.

If the merger is approved, the new EchoStar will provide consumers in my area an affordable high speed Internet access service via satellite. There are a small number of customers in my area who do enjoy access to high-speed Internet access service via cable and DSL service. For them, this merger will result in increased competition in the broadband market, potentially driving down prices of DSL and cable providers. However, the majority of the homes, schools and businesses in my area are beyond the reach of cable and DSL wires. For these customers, the new EchoStar would be their only chance of getting an affordable high speed Internet service.

Whether or not my customers have access to cable, and most do not, all of them will benefit from the new company's ability to better compete with cable. EchoStar has pledged to offer nationwide prices and services -- bringing the benefits of vigorous competition with cable -- to customers everywhere.

Since its inception, direct broadcast satellite TV providers have offered uniform, nationwide pricing structures, and the new company has guaranteed that it will continue this practice. Nationwide pricing offers customers in rural America the full benefits of the rigorous competition occurring in urban and suburban areas. I can rest assured that satellite TV will remain a competitively priced product.

The new company will offer many benefits to customers, but the most important one is local broadcast channels via satellite in all U.S. television markets. This is the one service most sought after by my customers. I urge you to support the proposed merger between EchoStar and DIRECTV because local channels for all Americans is only possible if the companies are allowed to combine.

Sincerely,

Charles W. Harris  
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Grand Rapids, MI 49525